

The monk nodded and bowed.

"You are very perceptive. Now, can you tell me what are the results of this nourishment?"

Kochu replied, "The leaves of the tree, the blossoms, the scent and the pollen," then added, "in truth, the trunk, bark and the very life of the whole tree is the result of all nourishment!"

The monk paused a moment to reflect upon Kochu's answer.

"Now," he continued, "point out to me where the giving ends and the receiving begins."

"But I cannot do so!"

"Very well then: please point out to me where the receiving ends and the giving begins."

"I cannot do that, either."

The monk then smiled, bowed deeply before Kochu, and said, "Thank you."

At that moment Kochu was enlightened.

-- Salvatore Salerno Jr.

Fresno CA

#### EMANCIPATION BY DEPRECIATION

There was a painting that was in pain: because it was hung in the wrong place. The wall of a philistine's apartment was an injustice assigned by fate. The painting felt framed. It was the victim of a bad frame-up job.

Its owner was a shrewd speculator. He had bought it at a painters' sale; the value would soon appreciate at a most consuming rate.

The painting hated to be where it was. The very wallpaper behind it was a tribute to the worst taste. At its side, the window curtains were laden with ugly tassels, and underneath a table held a jar pretending in vain to be a vase of the classical strain. From the ceiling dangled a hideous chandelier. A rug on the floor was woven of revolting stuff; from its midst, a design assaulted any eye with the imprudence to address its gaze downward. The proprietor of these effects was incorrectly judged by the

most lenient aesthetic standard. Whenever he glanced, proudly possessive, at the disgruntled painting, the offense was unforgivable. The wound would never be redressed.

The painting remained in this intolerable state. It waited, with waning hope, to be sold into the collection of a more sympathetic connoisseur. With favorable company, as the stablemate of first-rate pictures, it would project its value to compel a truthful vision. It would be admired by the greatest of all visual critics.

Protesting its unnatural environment, the painting waited until it was shown by the owner to an important guest: then it dismayed the spectators by literally shrinking, leaving wallpaper between its margins and the clumsy frame. The owner tried to restretch it -- ripping it slightly. He phoned an art restorer, who rushed over immediately with a kit of restorative chemicals. But they were for a different period, and changed the painting's identity.

An art appraiser was called in. The owner trembled, dreading a terrible depreciation. This was confirmed. The painting, now not recognizable from what it was, had its value lowered to the "worthless" category. The owner gathered spittle in his mouth, enough for stamping many envelopes: he voided it on his former asset, and summoned the most disreputable auctioneer to dispense of an object so perverse in its disloyalty that a profit would never be made on it. In the auctioneer's van, the painting resumed its former size, as well as its original shapes and colors. And it was free of the frame, as a bulky woman from her unmanageable corset.

#### INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT THAT FINALLY REACHES THE PHILOSOPHICAL STAGE

A man was arrested for unemployment. While in jail, he filled out an application form, and sent it to a prospective employer. The answer came back that because of his jail record, it was not the company's policy to hire him. This additional unemployment, to the regret of the warden, for whom the man had been on model behavior, increased the prison sentence, and automatically made him undesirable for civilian employment. This, coupled with the prisoner's record of poverty, classified him as a social outcast, which in turn imposed another severe penalty. Under heavy guard, the man was removed to an unescapable chamber. There, in the eyes of the law, his unemployment reached the incurable stage, and he was retried, and given a life